

South Dakota National Guard

Public Affairs Office

Phone: 605-737-6721 Email: ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil Web: sd.ng.mil



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SD Guard leaders visit Suriname to bolster state partnership

By Sgt. Dustin Jordan – SDNG Public Affairs Office

PARAMARIBO, Suriname - Senior leaders from the South Dakota National Guard visited the Republic of Suriname to reinforce its state partnership with Suriname Defense Force officials, Nov. 22-25.

SDNG leaders met with Suriname's minister of defense, the U.S. ambassador to Suriname, and other SDF leaders to collaborate on ideas for working together and providing future training opportunities for both organizations.

South Dakota and Suriname, in coordination with U.S. Southern Command, established a successful security cooperation relationship in 2006 under the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program. Since then, numerous exchanges have taken place between the SDNG and Suriname's Defense Forces to share experiences and best practices in a variety of military training and topics.

"The South Dakota National Guard has an excellent relationship with Suriname," said Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, SDNG adjutant general. "It's been a good program over the years. We do many engagements each year with them coming to South Dakota and South Dakota going to Suriname."

The State Partnership Program provides unique capacity-building capabilities to combatant commanders through partnerships between U.S. states and foreign countries. The program helps to support U.S. national interests and security cooperation goals by engaging partner nations through military-to-military exchanges.

"The relationship between South Dakota and Suriname is very positive," said Brig. Gen. Michael Oster, SD Army Guard assistant adjutant general. "It reaches further than people realize. We have been able to meet people and develop relationships not only at the senior leadership level, but on multiple levels that will shape how the partnership will develop going forward."

The partnership has made an impact to both organizations over the past 13 years. Every year, nearly a dozen exchanges take place between SDNG and SDF service members that enhances training, skills, techniques and operational processes and procedures.

"The projects that the South Dakota National Guard have done over the years have always been very well received by the people," said Marlette. "We have done medical missions, engineering projects and exchanged leadership ideas."

"We have also worked on things that have national impact, such as how to respond in support to civil authorities in the event of a natural disaster or civil disturbance," added Marlette. "The exchange of ideas has been beneficial to both organizations."

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During the visit, the SDNG also attended Suriname's National Day celebration.

"We always come down for their National Day celebration, which is equivalent to our nation's Independence Day," said Marlette. "This shows our recognition and support for them as a partner nation."

Oster also emphasized the benefit the partnership has on providing additional perspective.

"In an area where one of us are a little more experienced or have had a little more exposure, we can share alternate ways of doing business," he said. "Maybe more than that, you also get different perspectives on what you are already doing well."

"You get a more worldly awareness," Oster added. "It may seem that South Dakota and Suriname are very far apart, but when you get together you realize that people are people, and we have more in common than you might think."

The SDNG and Suriname will continue to explore new opportunities for the future of the partnership.

"There are now new opportunities to work together through our military academies," Oster said. "We are very much looking forward to collaborating and sharing best practices in this area as we have in so many others over the years."

"The State Partnership Program is a great tool for U.S. Southern Command to use to help stabilize the region and combat foreign influences that might not share the same values and priorities of the United States," said Marlette. "The Suriname government likes working with us and we like working with them. This program will continue to be successful for many years into the future."

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High resolution photos available upon request.



191122-Z-BS230-0007: Senior leaders with the South Dakota National Guard and Surinamese Defense Force collaborate on ideas for working together and providing training opportunities for both organizations during a senior leader engagement in Paramaribo, Suriname, Nov. 22, 2019. The SDNG and SDF leaders conducted the engagement as part of the State Partnership Program, which seeks to support security cooperation relationships by sharing experiences and best practices in a variety of military training and topics. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Dustin Jordan)



191122-Z-BS230-0003: Senior leaders with the South Dakota National Guard meet with Lt. Col. Danielle Veira, Suriname director of national security in Paramaribo, Suriname, Nov. 22, 2019. SDNG leaders met with the Suriname minister of defense, the U.S. Ambassador to Suriname, and other military leaders to collaborate on ideas for working together and providing training opportunities for both organizations. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Dustin Jordan)



191122-Z-BS230-0010: U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, South Dakota National Guard adjutant general, conducts a pass and review of Suriname Defense Force service members in Paramaribo, Suriname, Nov. 22, 2019. The SDNG and SDF officials conducted a senior leader engagement as part of the State Partnership Program, which seeks to support security cooperation relationships by sharing experiences and best practices in a variety of military training and topics. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Dustin Jordan)



191125-Z-BS230-0002: Senior leaders from the South Dakota National Guard view the Surinamese National Day Parade in Membre Boekoe Kazerne, Suriname, along with other military and civilian personnel, Nov. 25, 2019. SDNG leaders traveled to Suriname to meet with Suriname Defense Force officials to reinforce its State Partnership Program, which seeks to support its security cooperation relationship by sharing experiences and best practices in a variety of military training and topics. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Dustin Jordan)



191125-Z-BS230-0001: Soldiers from the Suriname Army's Special Forces march during Suriname's National Day celebration and parade in Membre Boekoe Kazerne, Nov. 25, 2019. Senior leaders from the South Dakota National Guard visited Suriname to reinforce the existing partnership between the South Dakota National Guard and Suriname military. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Dustin Jordan)



191122-Z-BS230-0009: U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, South Dakota National Guard adjutant general, meets with Karen Lynn Williams, U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Suriname, at the U.S. embassy in Paramaribo, Suriname, during a senior leader engagement, Nov. 22, 2019. South Dakota and Suriname, in coordination with U.S. Southern Command have had a successful security cooperation relationship under the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Dustin Jordan)



191122-Z-BS230-0005: U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, South Dakota National Guard adjutant general, speaks with a Suriname school official during a site visit to a school SDNG Soldiers helped to renovate in Paramaribo, Suriname, Nov. 22, 2019. The SDNG worked alongside Suriname Defense Force engineers earlier this year to complete repair projects at the school through its State Partnership Program. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Dustin Jordan)



191122-Z-BS230-0006: Senior leaders with the South Dakota National Guard and Surinamese Defense Force pose for a photo during a senior leader engagement in Paramaribo, Suriname, Nov. 22, 2019. SDNG and Suriname leaders conducted the engagement as part of its State Partnership Program, which seeks to support a security cooperation relationship by sharing experiences and best practices in a variety of military training and topics. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Dustin Jordan)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact the SDNG Public Affairs Office at (605) 737-6721 or e-mail ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil